TWO SECTIONS SECTION TWO

CHILD STUDY

THE SUMMER PLAY SCHOOL

Vacation—and Nowhere to Go

The Summer Play School Program

Suggestions for Starting a Summer Play School

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The Play School Program

Happy, Well-directed Activity

Manual expression, through shop work, such as carpentry, printing or cobbling; through domestic science, including sewing and cooking; and through handicraft such as stenciling, clay work, poster making and batik work.

Aesthetic development through dancing, dramatics, handicraft and music.

Nature study: class work, outings, trips to museums, gardening, collections.

Home Hygiene: first aid, home nursing, nutrition.

Special Outings: boat rides, bus rides, picnics, movies, day outings in the country.

Health Work

A preliminary medical examination, followed by corrective and remedial work.

A hot luncheon every day with green vegetables.

A rest period immediately after luncheon.

Milk and crackers in the middle of the afternoon.

Out of door exercise.

Individual Expression

Small groups, trained teachers and a flexible schedule allowing for freedom of choice.

Social Relationships

Luncheons together, assemblies and outings help cultivate individual and group responsibility.

Children's councils, assisting in questions of policy and discipline, give training in democracy.

Bringing the Home and the School Together

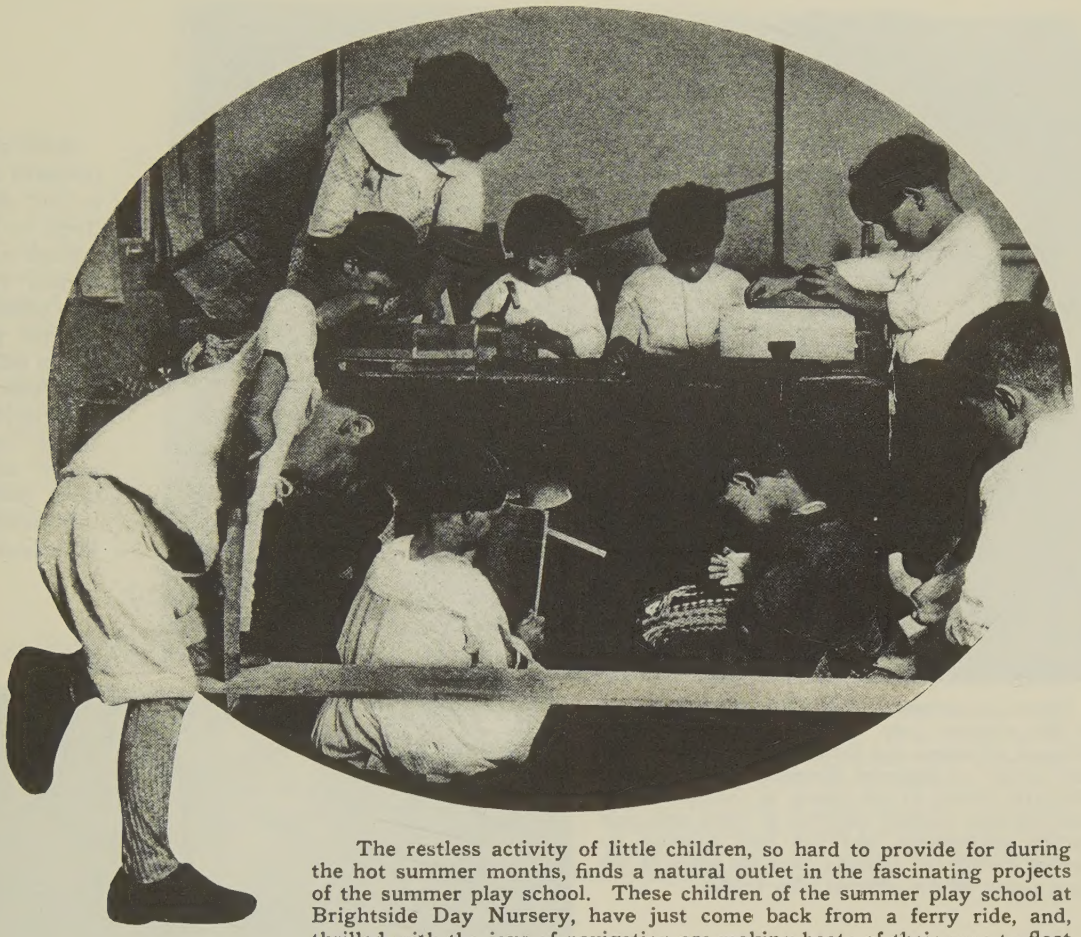
Mother's meetings in which the principles underlying the play school are explained, so that mothers can carry them on through the year. Talks are given on obedience, children's allowances, habits and other phases of child training.

Home visitors to help in making adjustments in special cases.

The summer play schools make use of existing organizations, equipment and supplies. They are directed by the

CHILD STUDY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, Inc.,

54 W. 74th St., New York City



The restless activity of little children, so hard to provide for during the hot summer months, finds a natural outlet in the fascinating projects of the summer play school. These children of the summer play school at Brightside Day Nursery, have just come back from a ferry ride, and, thrilled with the joys of navigation are making boats of their own to float on bath tub and park pond.

Vacation—and Nowhere to Go

By Helen A. Storey

IT was a spring day, and yet Mrs. McMahon was worried. The brighter the sun, the softer the air which floated in at the window, the deeper grew her brown study. Because the coming of spring meant inevitably that summer would soon be at hand, and then the problem of what to do with Madge would be upon her again.

Last year Madge had gone to camp. She had come back rosy and happy, enthusiastic over camp life and the new friends she had made. But when Madge's mother reckoned up the family budget, she knew very well that this year camp would be out of the question.

It did seem a pity to keep the child in the city all summer. There would be long hours of idleness when she would have nothing to do except to stay home and read—and Madge was too inclined to do this, anyway. Her friends were all planning vacations elsewhere. As soon as school closed, they would scatter.

An interruption to her thoughts came in the

Chosen to represent their class in the final fete of the summer play schools in Central Park, Frances, Gianinna and Edward from the summer play school at Emanuel Sisterhood are giving a character dance to the music of Gounod. The working and playing together of boys and girls during adolescence and the free exercise so needed during the summer time are some of the good points of the summer play school.

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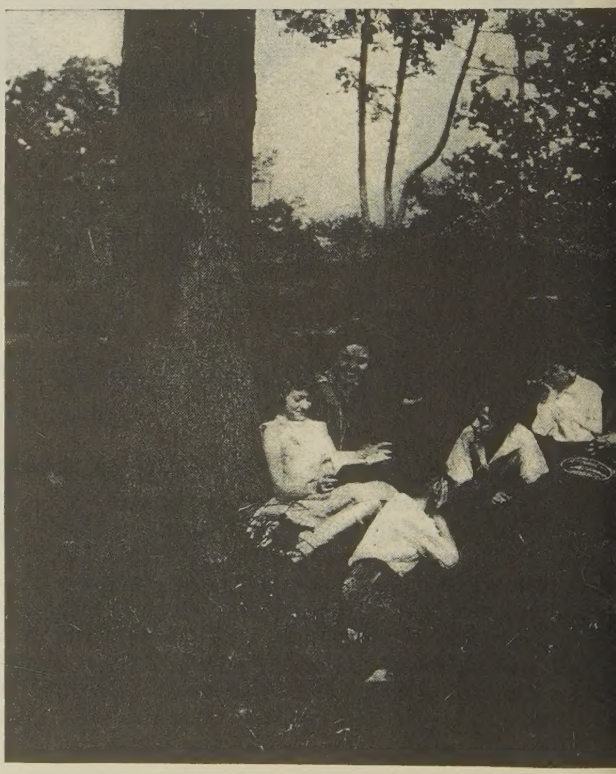

form of the cleaning woman. Madge's mother suddenly had an idea. Surely every little city girl and boy couldn't go out of the city for the whole summer. *What did they do, then?*

"And how is your Jennie?" she asked Mrs. Smith.

"She's well, thank you, ma'am."

"What do you do with her when school closes and summer comes? Does she go to a fresh air camp?"

"Not any more. She did year before last, but she couldn't get in last year. Anyway it was only for two weeks and the rest of the summer was long and hot. No, she's been going to the summer play school at the settlement house."

"But I thought the settlement house closed during the summer?"

"Well, it did use to, but last year a lady

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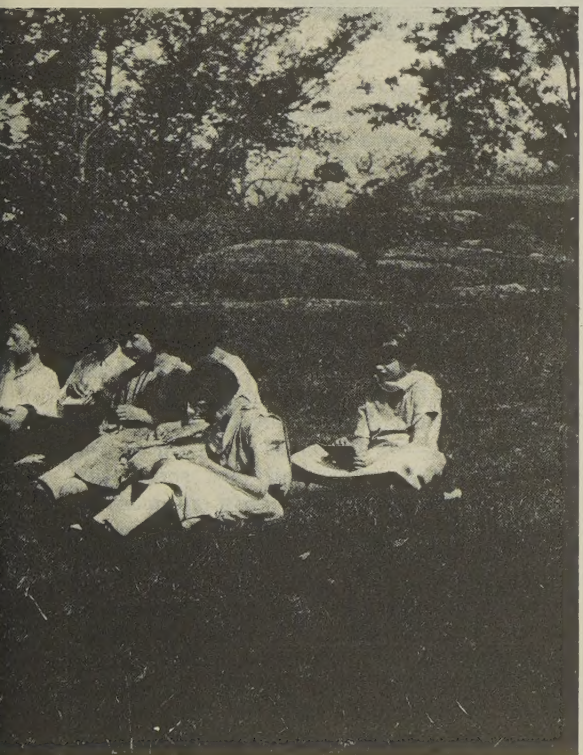
Perhaps the happiest time of the summer play school day is the lunch hour. A hot lunch in the middle of the day, served attractively, with flowers in the center of the neatly laid table is a new experience for many of these children. Even two or three-year-olds help set the table, take turns in serving the food, and polish up their spoons and napkin rings when the meal is over.



came around and said they were starting a summer play school, and did I want Jennie to go. I asked her all about it. She said that they were going to give the children trips out through the country and to the parks, with the teacher to tell them all about things; and that the children would play and dance on the roof and would learn how to cook and sew and make things for the house and have little plays and everything. And she said they would give the children a hot lunch every day, and crackers and milk in the afternoon."

"Did Jennie like it?" asked Mrs. McMahon.

"She *loved* it. She's been a different girl ever since. She gained five pounds weight, she doesn't fuss about her food as she used to, and she's shown me how to make beds a different way. I said, if *you're* learning so much at the summer play school, they ought to have a place

The mother's section of the summer play school is one of its most important features. Simple, direct, talks are given on obedience, punishment, fear and habit training. These mothers at Hamilton House often come to meetings at the cost of much planning and sacrifice, and many of them are hampered by a lack of knowledge of English. Yet at their own request the meetings have been continued through the winter.

where I can go and get some new ideas, too. And sure enough, one night she came home with an invitation for me to a mother's meeting. Well, I went, and they organized a class to meet at four o'clock on Wednesdays."

"Could you find time to go?" Mrs. McMahon wondered.

"Well, at first I thought I couldn't, and then I changed one of my regular cleaning times to another afternoon and found I could get it in. There were twenty-five of us mothers, and we all came every time."

"What did they talk about?"

"Well, the leader told us a lot of things about how we shouldn't make the children mind just because we wanted them to, but only for some good reason. I'd been having such times with Jimmie, and I tried the way she said to manage him and it seemed to work much better. And she said we could get the children to eat vegetables if we fixed them up better. We had cooking classes and now we're meeting the whole year round. Yes, they're going to have play school again this summer, the lady is already over at the settlement house planning it all out. Jimmie's going, too, this year, and he'll learn carpentry work, and everything."

Mrs. McMahon thoughtfully put on her hat and coat and took the cross town car to the settlement house. She had read somewhere that to be happy in a large city one must be very poor or very rich, and she was beginning to see the reason for this apparently meaningless statement. Very poor—that meant that you could go to clinics, could get a free bed in the hospital, and could go to fresh air camps, could go to this summer play school Mrs. Smith was telling about. That sounded like such a sensible way to take care of the children through the summer—just as sensible as the

public schools in winter—or the public libraries. Why should such a fine idea be for one section only? Couldn't it be a community enterprise and include every child who for one reason or another had to stay in the city during the summer?

Mrs. McMahon found herself asking these very questions of "the lady in the settlement house," who proved to be the principal of the summer school there and was just getting ready for the year's work. She was very cordial; she showed the records of the children's medical examinations; the playground for the children up on the roof; the cheerful dining room with curtains which the children had stenciled and china which they had decorated; and the cool, quiet rest-rooms where they had half an hour's nap every day. She told Mrs. McMahon that there were eighteen of these summer play schools in New York City and that there was one in Cleveland; and that the director of them all had an office up town and would be glad to talk with her.

This was another idea, and Madge's mother could not resist following it up. She found the director very busy, but quite glad to tell her the things she wanted to know. She discovered that the summer play schools *were* really a community enterprise; that the city board of education was giving them supplies, teachers and even buildings; that other community organizations were joining in to help.

The director told her that while each play school found its own building and arranged for its own supplies and teachers, the central organization* was a clearing house for the help offered by other agencies and knew how to go about finding the right kind of teachers for the schools. It engaged, she said, special teachers for music, nature study, craft work and the like, and "rented them out" at so much an hour to the different play schools.

"We have started schools in the more crowded sections at first," she said. "But there's no reason why summer summer play schools couldn't be organized to take care of all the children in the community who do not go away."

Madge's mother went home with her head full of plans. She had been a teacher herself and she knew Madge's school principal. From him she could find out the other children of that school who would be in the city during the summer, and with all the advice and help the director could give it might be possible to start a play school right in her own neighborhood.

The apartment seemed happier and sunnier when she went back to it, and as she sat at her desk and thought out the different steps she would have to take, she realized how much the success of this enterprise would mean, not only to Madge, but to perhaps fifty other boys and girls who needed something to do and somewhere to go in the long summer vacation.

* Child Study Association of America, Inc.

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Suggestions for Starting Summer Play Schools

To find the children most in need of help, consult with public school principals, school nurses, hospital clinics, community centers and settlements.

Buildings: Public schools, private schools, settlements, hospital roofs and combinations of two or more buildings if adjacent have been used in New York City. Children may be taken in buses if the building is at some distance from their home.

Equipment: Organizations, either public or private, which have carried on similar programs during the winter but are inactive during the summer will often be helpful in loaning equipment. In New York City the Board of Education is one of the organizations which co-operates in this way.

Supplies: Private agencies, such as department stores, will often give reduced rates or donations toward educational work. In New York City the Board of Education gives supplies.

Food: Milk companies, markets, large and small grocery concerns may be approached for reduced rates or donations. Many people who have country homes are glad to share with the children in the play schools fresh vegetables and flowers.

Staff: Each play school should have a person of experience and understanding to act as principal. Highly trained teachers of special subjects may be shared by several small schools. College and normal school students can often be used as teachers. New York City gives several teachers each year from its Vacation Playground Staff.

Outings: Parks, museums, libraries, swimming pools can be used, with the co-operation of officials in charge. Ferries, boat companies and other transportation companies will often contribute free rides to the children. Moving picture companies will sometimes give free admissions.

Summer Play Schools Already Organized

New York City

Beth Israel Hospital
Brightside Day Nursery
Bronx House
Emanuel Sisterhood
Ethical Culture School
Federation Settlement
Florence Baker House
Grosvenor House
Hamilton House
Henry Street Settlement
Hudson Guild
Lenox Hill Hospital
Madison House
Mt. Sinai Hospital
New York Infirmary
P. S. No. 4, Bronx
Temple Israel Community Center

Cleveland, Ohio

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